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CLAIM OF THE IROQUOIS INDIANS
REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER





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REPORT
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COMMISSIONER

APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR.

ON THE

CLAIM

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IROQUOIS INDIANS.

MADE TO THE LEGISLATURE, NOV. 3, 1855.

MONTPELIER :

E. P. WALTON, JR., PRINTER.

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REPORT.

*To the General Assembly of the State of Vermont, now
in session :*

ON the 22d day of January last, I was appointed by his Excellency, Governor Royce, a Commissioner, to discharge the duties indicated by a resolution adopted at the last Legislature of Vermont: That the Governor be directed to appoint a Commissioner to ascertain the amount and extent of the claim of the Iroquois Indians upon this State for compensation for land formerly owned by them in this State, and that said Commissioner be fully empowered to negotiate said claim, and ascertain what sum, to be paid by this State, will satisfy the same. and report the result of their investigations and negotiations to the next General Assembly of this State. And I now submit to the Legislature the result of my investigations and negotiations, with said Iroquois Indians, together with such facts as I have been able to gather, from the early history of this people.

In the year 1609, a Frenchman by the name of Champlain, in company with several other Frenchmen, and about one hundred of the Canadian Indians, started from Quebec, upon an expedition against their enemies, the Iroquois Indians.

Champlain's object was to explore the country, and to assist the Canada Indians in their wars against the Iroquois Indians.

After leaving the River St. Lawrence they struck another river, which the Indians called Iroquois, and soon reached a lake by the same name, to which Champlain gave his own name. As they proceeded up the lake, they soon came in sight of the Green Mountains, upon the East side of the lake, and upon inquiry of the Indians, Champlain was told that this was the country of the Iroquois, but that their enemies lived still farther to the south, upon the west side of the Lake, where the country was thickly settled with the Iroquois.

It was subsequently ascertained that the Iroquois were a very powerful confederacy, consisting of the Mohawks, Onondagas, Oniedas, Cayugas, and Senecas; each having their own territory, but had united together for the common defense of their own country, and also for prosecuting their wars against their enemies, and extending their own dominions. The Mohawks resided in the Valley of the Mohawk River, and it was subsequently admitted by the people of New York, and by historians, that their territory did extend into the present limits of Vermont, and that they had some few settlements in the Valleys of Vermont, at a very early day.

Immediately after the settlement of the Province of Lower Canada was commenced by the French, their Jesuit Missionaries went in every direction, among the natives of the forest, with a two-fold purpose. One was

to bring them over to the interests of the French, and the other to induce them to embrace the Roman Catholic faith.

In this project they were very successful, and as early as 1670 to 1676, they induced a large portion of the Mohawk nation or tribe, to emigrate to the province of Lower Canada near Montreal, where they built a church, and soon after swore allegiance to the French Government.

The other portion of the Mohawks remained upon their own territory, and were the firm friends of the English during the French and English war, and so continued until the Revolution, when they still adhered to the interests of the English, and emigrated to the Province of Upper Canada, under the influence of the Johnson family.

From a subsequent negotiation and settlement of their respective claims by the State of New York, it is evident that those who emigrated to the province of Lower Canada, commonly known as the Caughnaugas, are the rightful claimants upon Vermont for compensation for their lands.

From the Caughnaugas, there was an emigration in the year 1759, to a place called St. Regis, and in 1780, another portion emigrated to a place called the Lake of Two Mountains, both of which tribes I have allowed to participate in common with the Caughnaugas, in the investigation of this claim.

In relation to the Iroquois having parted with the title to their lands in Vermont, there seems to be but very little evidence upon the subject.

It was claimed by the people of New York, at a very early day, that the Dutch had purchased this territory, extending to the Connecticut river, of the Indians, and that New York had taken it, by conquest, from the Dutch ; and New York, then a British Colony, claimed the territory under a grant of Charles Second to the Duke of York.

The British government also claim that large grants of land were made on both sides of the Lake, at an early day, by the consent of, and agreement with, the Iroquois Indians.

But I find no written documents to substantiate these claims. Still, it may be some evidence of these claims of New York, that the Iroquois, who claim this territory, left it at so early a period, and set up no claim for about a century and a quarter, to their lands, or for compensation.

Since the Iroquois emigrated to the Province of Lower Canada, there seems to be no evidence that they have occupied this territory, more than other tribes of Indians, but upon this point there is but very little history.

The habits and customs of the Indian tribes of the country, at an early day, were such, that the occupation of any territory for the purposes of hunting and fishing, rendered the possession of that territory as really theirs, as though they had cultivated fields, built houses, &c.

Hence, when we look at their former mode and habit of living, their ability to understand legal questions,

as practiced by enlightened nations, and the legal bearing of their own actions, they are all to be construed in their favor.

If they have parted with the title to their lands, it has usually been for a mere pittance, or at best, for a very small compensation.

I therefore recommend the claim of this unfortunate people, to the favorable consideration of the Legislature.

By a previous arrangement, I met the agents and deputies of the several Tribes interested in this claim, at the United States Hotel, in the Town of Massena, N. Y., on the 14th day of last June, and the following is the result of our investigations and negotiations.

All of which is very respectfully submitted.

JAMES M. HOTCHKISS.

MASSENA, STATE OF NEW YORK, June 14, 1855.

Present, J. M. Hotchkiss, Commissioner on the part of Vermont, and Joseph Kanataklah and Francis Athorishon, from Caughnauga, Rev. Eleazer Williams, St. Regis.

Gentlemen of the Iroquois :

The General Assembly of the State of Vermont, on the 14th day of November, 1854, adopted the following resolution :

Resolved, That the Governor be directed to appoint a Commissioner to ascertain the amount and extent of the claim of the Iroquois Indians upon this State for compensation for land formerly owned by them in this State, and that said Commissioner be fully empowered to negotiate said claim, and ascertain what sum, to be paid by this State, will satisfy the same, and report the result of his investigations and negotiations to the next General Assembly of this State.

On the 22d day of January, 1855, I received from his Excellency, Stephen Royce, the appointment of Commissioner to discharge the duties indicated by said Resolution.

Having caused the parties interested in this claim to be duly notified of the time and place of holding this meeting, I am now ready to proceed with the investigation.

Before proceeding with the investigation, allow me to inquire if the Iroquois Indians, designated by the foregoing Resolution, are all represented at this meeting.

Answer by Rev. Eleazar Williams.—There is a branch of the Iroquois at the Lake of Two Mountains, numbering about 258 souls which are not represented at this meeting. The notice of this meeting failed to reach them in season for them to attend. The American branch at St. Regis are not represented here, but have received due notice of this meeting.

The Commissioner considering it of the utmost importance that all the tribes interested in the claim against the State of Vermont, should be notified of this meeting, here suspended the investigation and adjourned to Wednesday the 20th inst., and caused a dispatch to be sent to the Chiefs of the Lake of the Mountains, notifying them to attend this meeting, if they have any claim to prefer against the State of Vermont.

MASSENA, June 20, 1855.

Present, James M. Hotchkiss, Commissioner on the part of Vermont, and Francis Athorishan and Joseph Kanataktah, who presented to the Commissioner the following instrument.

CAUGHNAWAGA, June 12, 1855.

This is to certify, that, this day, we the undersigned, Grand Chiefs, appoint and authorize as our Agents and Representatives, in all matters concerning the claims of the Iroquois Tribe of Caughnawaga, which lieth in the State of Vermont. Whatever shall be done by these two persons whom we duly authorize are to know and acknowledge as such, we shall bind, as though we were together. The two appointed are *Francis Athorishan* and *Joseph Kanataktah*. We name also the Interpreter, who has been since the year 1852, seventh of November, who has interpreted upon the communications of the claim, is Rev. Eleazer Williams our Interpreter.

[Signed,]

GRAND CHIEFS :

JOSEPH KENTORONTIE,
 LOUIS TIORAKARON,
 JOSEPH TAIORONIOTE,
 THOMAS ASENNASE,
 MARTIN SHAKORAIATAKWIIA,
 LOUIS SHATEKAIENTON.

Present on the part of the Iroquois at St. Regis, representing the British party, Rev. Eleazer Williams, who presented to the Commissioner the following Instrument :

Know all men by these presents, that we, Swasen Teiosharakwente, Tier Kanewatron, Rawi Tarakonente, Rawi Atawenta, Thomas Tahate, Chiefs and principal men of the St. Regis Indians, do hereby irrevocably make, constitute and appoint Eleazer Williams of Hogansburgh, of the State of New York, our true and lawful attorney, with power of substitution, for us and in our names, places and stead, to contract, treat, negotiate and bind said Tribe of Indians, and to release all debts, claims and dues of said Tribe, and to *transact all business* of all kinds, pertaining to their interest, and he is fully authorized to receive from the State of Vermont any pay or compensations for lands within the limits of said State, and to discharge all liabilities, claims or dues for such lands, from the State of Vermont, and in all things fully release all such claims and forever bind the St. Regis Indians and several members of said tribes respectively. And we do hereby and herewith empower our said attorney in our names, to give receipts and other sufficient discharges for such moneys due or claimed to be due as aforesaid, or sum as the State of Vermont may grant, hereby ratifying and confirming whatever our said attorney shall do in and about the premises by virtue hereof. In testimony whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and seals in the name and behalf of the St. Regis Indians, this third day of February, Anno Domini, 1855.

Signed and Sealed in presence of A. Fulton.

SWASEN TEISHORAKWENTE,	LS.
TIER X KANEWATERON,	LS.
KAWI X TARAKONNENTE,	LS.
RAWI X ATAWENTA,	LS.
THOMAS TAHATE,	LS.

STATE OF NEW YORK, } On the third day of February, in the
 Franklin County, ss. } year 1855, personally appeared before
 me the individuals described in, and who executed the above
 power of attorney, and severally acknowledged that they exe-
 cuted the same for the purposes therein mentioned.

ALFRED FULTON,

Justice of the Peace.

Present on the part of the Iroquois at Lake of the Mountains,
 Joseph Ononkwatkona and Francois Sasametest, Chiefs of said
 Tribe.

Present, on the part of the American party at St. Regis, Lou-
 is Taionote, Michel Gavanety, Peter Skatekaienton, denom-
 inating themselves trustees of said Tribe.

Gentlemen of the Iroquis :

The meeting for investigating and negotiating your claim
 against the State of Vermont is now open.

By the resolution which I have read in your hearing, adopt-
 ed at the last General Assembly of the State of Vermont, the
 Legislature virtually admit that there may be some ground for
 the claim of the Iroquois Indians against the State. It be-
 came the duty of the Commissioner, to ascertain who the Iro-
 quois Indians, designated in the resolution, were ; and after a
 thorough investigation of the subject, the Commissioner came
 to the conclusion that the tribes at Caughnawaga, the tribes
 at St. Regis and the tribe of Iroquois at the Lake of Two
 Mountains, are the proper and only tribes for the Commis-
 sioner to meet and negotiate with. We are now prepared to pro-
 ceed with the investigation. As the representative of the peo-
 ple of the State of Vermont, I shall endeavor to conduct the
 negotiations in behalf of the State, in a fair and honorable
 manner.

You will observe by the resolution under which we are now acting, that a report of the investigations or negotiations of this meeting, or any subsequent meeting, is to be submitted to the next General Assembly of the State of Vermont, for their approval or disapproval, as they in their judgment, shall think just and right.

Objection was made by the agents from Caughnawaga against admitting the agents from the Lake of Two Mountains to participate in this claim, upon the ground that they are not descendants of the Caughnawaga, they say that they have no record of their separation.

The Chiefs from the Lake of Two Mountains replied, that they separated from the Caughnawagas about the year 1789, and soon after emigrated to the Lake of Two Mountains; they have always claimed, and still claim, to belong to the Iroquois and relatives of the Caughnawagas and St Regis tribes. The St. Regis admit that they are of the Iroquois nation and entitled to participate in the claim against Vermont.

The Commissioner overruled the objection of the Caughnawagas, and the Chiefs from the Lake of Two Mountains were allowed to participate in the investigations, in common with the other agents.

*Interrogatory by the Commissioner.**Gentlemen :*

What is the amount and extent of your claim upon Vermont for compensation for the lands you originally claimed in said State? .

Brother :

We, the agents and deputies on the part of the Grand Chiefs of the Iroquois Indians at Caughnawaga, St. Regis and Lake of Two Mountains, are very happy in meeting you as Commissioner on the part of our brethren of Vermont. It is a long time since our fathers presented to the Grand Council of Vermont, their claim to their ancient hunting ground in said State. In behalf of said Iroquois Indians we return you many thanks for the several sums of money paid to our said agents from time to time, for which we most willingly acknowledge.

You now desire to be informed as to the amount and extent of our claim upon the State of Vermont for compensation for the land originally claimed by us in said State.

In answer, we refer you to the report of Mr. Redfield, as well as to our frequent memorials to the General Assembly of Vermont, beginning A. D. 1798. We now ask for pay for all lands lying northerly of a strait line from Ticonderoga to the great falls of Otter Creek, (called Sutherland's Falls,) from thence to be continued to the top of the Green Mountains, thence along said mountains which divide the water that runs into Connecticut river and the water that flows into Lake Champlain and Mississquoi river, to the latitude of 45°.

We are of the opinion that there is east of the New York line, within this tract or territory, much more than two

millions of acres of land, exclusive of the waters of Lake Champlain, and including the islands not ceded to the State of New York by the Treaty of A. D. 1796. As relates to the value of this, our hunting ground, We, on behalf of the Iroquois Indians of Caughnawaga, St. Regis and Lake of Two Mountains, Indians, propose to you, Mr. Commissioner, to relinquish to the State of Vermont our claims to said territory upon the following condition, viz: We propose to take into consideration at least twenty of the most favorable treaties made between the United States and different tribes or nations of Indians within the past thirty years, wherein lands by said Indians had been ceded to the United States. As you have so long occupied our ancient hunting ground, and thereby deprived us in a great measure of the means of maintaining our numerous families, you in honest justice ought to pay to us an average price equal to the average price per acre of said twenty treaties by us selected, whatever shall prove to be the average sum per acre, by the United States, for cessions of lands embraced in said twenty treaties, shall be the sum to be paid to us by the State of Vermont, for our hunting ground.

Brother: in your report to our Father Governor Royce, you will request him to consider well this our first proposition for settlement, and that he will present it to the members of your Grand Council when assembled at your Wigwam in October next. We say to you, Brother, that we will be present, ready to hold a further conference with you, in hopes that we shall make a final settlement and to our mutual satisfaction.

The foregoing is respectfully submitted to the consideration of the Commissioner by his friends and brothers, the deputies.

MASSENA, June 21, 1855.

Brothers :

I have listened attentively to your speech of yesterday, and considered it well. In your speech you propose to relinquish to the State of Vermont all claim to territory you have described, as your ancient hunting ground, provided the State of Vermont will take into consideration twenty of the most favorable treaties made between the United States and different tribes of Indians within the last thirty years, wherein lands by said Indians have been ceded to the United States. And further, you ask that the average price of the land per acre, ceded in those treaties, shall be considered the price per acre of your ancient hunting ground in Vermont. Said treaties to be selected by you.

Brothers: This appears to me to be a very indefinite way of arriving at any proper conclusion. If your proposition was to be accepted, it might be exceedingly difficult, and be attended with great expense, to ascertain what the price per acre of the lands ceded to the United States would be, as most of the treaties are for the extinguishment of the Indian claims, and no number of acres defined. But your proposition appears to be wholly inadmissible.

In the first place, you will observe, that many of the Indian tribes were living upon their lands at the time the treaties were made with them, and had valuable improvements, and their titles to their lands undisputed, and their lands at so late a period had become very valuable. Your title to lands in Vermont is not only doubtful, but it is utterly denied, and it has never been admitted that you have any legal claim; and you only ask for compensation for the lands your ancestors once occupied as their hunting ground. You say in honest justice that the people of Vermont ought to pay you, as specified above, from the fact that they have so long lived upon your ancient

hunting ground, and thereby deprived you in a great measure of the means of supporting your numerous families.

You will please to observe, that your ancestors left their ancient hunting ground and emigrated to Canada about the year 1676, and placed themselves under the Crown of France, and soon after swore allegiance to his Majesty's government, became the allies of the French and the enemies of the English and American Colonies. Had your fathers chosen to have remained on your hunting grounds in Vermont (if they ever occupied them,) they might have done so until their title should have been extinguished by purchase in a fair and honorable manner; and that sense of justice, which has always been prominent with the people of Vermont, in all their transactions with their neighbors, warrants the belief that they would not have endeavored to obtain it in any other way. But the country was found to be vacant at an early day, and grants of lands were made to the people of Vermont, first by the Governor of New Hampshire; then New York claimed the territory of Vermont upon the ground that it was a Dutch province, and that the Dutch had purchased it of the Indians, and New York, then a British province, had taken it by conquest from the Dutch, and by a grant of Charles Second to the Duke of York in the years 1664 and 1674 of the disputed territory. Whether the lands in Vermont were ceded to the Dutch in an early day, as claimed by New York, I have no further means of knowing; but one thing is certain, that the king of Great Britain, when the territory was claimed by New York, made grants of land extending upon the territory which you claim in Vermont, without requiring a previous purchase from you, or any other nation, or tribe of Indians; which is a very strong proof against the existence of any title, in you, to the lands your ancestors owned in Vermont.

Many of the early settlers of Vermont, after purchasing their

lands from New Hampshire, repurchased them from New York, and after continuing the controversy with New Hampshire and New York for a quarter of a century or more, it was finally settled by the State of Vermont paying New York the sum of thirty thousand dollars to relinquish her claim to the territory of Vermont.

So you see, Brothers, that the people of Vermont have already paid very dear for their lands.

It was not my intention to enter into any very lengthy argument relative to the merits of your claim, only sufficient to show you that it is of a very doubtful character, and will probably be so regarded by the Legislature of Vermont. The Commissioners on the part of New York with whom you treated in 1796, so regarded it, and only settled and paid you something for the lands you claimed in the State of New York, that they might give contentment, and live in good neighborhood with you. So, I apprehend, it will be with the Legislature of Vermont. If they are induced to give you any thing for the extinguishment of your claim, it will be upon the ground of giving mutual satisfaction; and the amount they may be induced to give, will depend very much upon the merits of your claim.

Brothers, I now wait for you to give a definite answer to one part of my inquiry, viz :

What is the amount of your claim against the State of Vermont for your ancient hunting grounds ?

In fixing on a definite sum, you will allow me to suggest, that, the smaller the sum you claim, the greater will be the probability that the Legislature will allow it.

Brother :

In answer to your two first questions given us in writing, Friday last, we had no idea of giving offence. We claim the privilege of answering in our own way ; for want of better information, possibly some portions of our answer may be considered surplusage, or in other words, inadmissable. Brother, in answer to yours of this day, we observe that you are not well pleased with ours of yesterday, as regards the price of our hunting grounds in Vermont. As Indians, we did suppose that the people of Vermont would be willing to pay us poor Indians as much per acre as the United States Government pay other Tribes or Nations of Indians for their hunting grounds.— Brother, we have well considered your answer to us of yesterday, and have concluded to make the people of Vermont, through you, a further offer, as we are very desirous of being considered just, honest, and generous. We now say further, the people of Vermont may have their choice, either to pay us four cents per acre for our hunting grounds lying easterly of the New York state line, after deducting that portion of the waters of Lake Champlain, or an average of the twenty treaties as communicated in our answer of yesterday ; or you may pay us \$89,600, at such time as may hereafter be agreed upon. Brother, we say that we have in our possession volumes of treaties published by the general government, and other official documents, from which we learn the date of each treaty, with whom made, the amount ceded to the United States in acres, the sum paid in consideration of said cessions, from the origin of government to A. D. 1840. The same documents are in your State Library. Therefore, Brother, it is a very easy matter for our Brothers of Vermont, to examine for themselves ; we prefer the privilege of selecting the twenty treaties ; we most willingly give our Brethren their choice.

Brother : as regards that portion of your answer to ours of

yesterday as relates to our equitable or legal claim to our hunting grounds in Vermont, we have taken good counsels and say in brotherly love, that we consider our claim on our ancient hunting grounds in Vermont just in equity, and that we are legally entitled to a reasonable compensation. We are prepared to make many quotations from the decisions and records of the white men, in our favor. We forbear at present from making but one extract. Brother, we refer you to the second page, second paragraph, of Mr, Redfield's report :

“ There seems no reason to doubt that the Iroquois had possession of these lands and exercised dominion over the same, until dispossessed by the encroachments of civilization ; and had, what has been treated by the United States Government, in other cases, title to these lands ; and have never parted with that title by any treaty or compact, to which they, as a tribe or nation, have been a party.”

Brother, this extract, with others on page tenth and eleventh, from said report, justifies us in believing that our claim on Vermont is just and equitable.

All the foregoing is respectfully submitted to the Commissioner, by the Deputies.

The meeting was now adjourned, until the first Monday after the second Thursday in October next, at Montpelier, Vermont.

MONTPELIER, October 15, 1855.

The agents of the Iroquois met the Commissioner agreeably to adjournment, and again adjourned to October 17, 1855.

MONTPELIER, Oct. 17, 1855.

Gentlemen of the Iroquois.

I have listened attentively to your second proposition, which is to pay you four cents per acre, or the sum of eighty nine thousand six hundred Dollars, for your ancient hunting ground in Vermont.

You seem to infer from my reply of the 21st June, that your language, or manner of speaking, in a previous proposition had given me offence. In this you are mistaken, your language and manner of expression are very acceptable, your proposition was wholly inadmissible.

In your last proposition, you refer to Mr. Redfield's report, to substantiate a legal claim to a reasonable compensation for your lands in Vermont. The paragraph to which you refer, is as follows :

“There seems no reason to doubt, that the Iroquois had possession of these lands and exercised dominion over the same, until dispossessed by the encroachments of civilization, and had what has been treated by the United States Government in other cases, title to these lands ; and have never parted with that title by any treaty or compact, to which they, as a tribe or nation have been a party.”

I have already shown you in a previous reply, that you forsook your country, as early as 1675 or 1676, and yourselves admit that you left your country even earlier than this period, and emigrated to the province of Lower Canada, near where you now reside, which was then a French province ; you then swore allegiance to the French Government, became their allies in War, and the inveterate enemies of the English colonies in America. At this early period there was not a white inhabitant residing within the present limits of Vermont, neither was there any settlements of white persons in Vermont, to any extent, for nearly half a century subsequent to that period.

When you left your hunting grounds, and emigrated to Can-

ada, you left a wilderness and went into the midst of civilization; Montreal and the adjacent country, was at that time, quite numerously settled by the French.

In relation to your having parted with your title to your hunting grounds, there seems to be but very little evidence upon the subject. The fact that your ancestors abandoned their lands at so early a period, and no claim or ownership was set up for nearly a century and a quarter, seems pretty conclusive evidence that they had parted with their title in some manner, in a very early day.

I find by examining the Documentary history of New York Vol 1, Page 582, that the board of trade at London declare, that by agreement with the Iroquois Indians, the land on both sides the Lake to a very great extent, was granted by the Governors of New York, to British Subjects, a long while previous to the year 1731. There is other testimony which goes to prove the same facts.

Your last proposition of \$89,600, is entirely out of the question, and unless you should think proper to make a very different proposition, I shall feel myself under the necessity of declining your proposition altogether. In your treaty with New York, A. D. 1796, you accepted a sum equivalent to about twenty thousand Dollars, and extinguished your claim to a tract of country much larger (if I mistake not) than what you claim in Vermont.

There are many reasons why your claim upon New York for compensation, was better than it is upon Vermont. The first, and perhaps most important is, that you were living upon your lands in New York, and had been for a great number of years, which is very good evidence that you had not parted with the title, nor did not intend to abandon them. If you have any further propositions to make, I am now ready to receive them.

JAMES M. HOTCHKISS, *Commissioner.*

MONTPELIER, October 18, 1855.

Mr. Commissioner on the part of the State of Vermont :

In reply of our last meeting at the State House, we will say, in the very commencement of our Father's communications upon this State, was in the year 1798, for compensation for their hunting grounds within the State, for which they claim and ask compensation, and have visited the Honorable Assembly of the Legislature, up to A. D. 1826. Several appropriations were made for their expenses while attending upon the Legislature, as a gratuity, and token of friendship, and have always been rejected, not coming to a final settlement ; but have not ceded a dollar's worth of the lands which they claim in Vermont, to any Government whatever, upon said claim on Vermont. And our ideas in the year 1852, were the same as our forefathers' communications for compensation for land in this State, and did not in the least intend to make any price whatever, as we had full confidence in the generosity of the people of the State of Vermont ; and our communication did not have any effect at this Session.

We again visited your respectable House, the preceding year in 1853—the Legislature were at their session ; we were then listened at, and instructions were given us to have our communication entered into the House of Representatives. Mr. Redfield was then appointed to make a Report at the next Session, in relation to our claim in Vermont.

At the next Session of 1854, we again presented our claim at your council fire, at your wigwam in the city of Montpelier, and renewed our claim. We then waited to witness whether our communication should succeed or have it ended by the Legislature. Our brotherly thanks to those who pitied and respected us, so far as putting life to our communications, which was through the goodness and kindness and humanity, also from the good feelings of the people of Vermont ; it is true that joy went through our whole Iroquois Tribe, when the Report

was made by us of being in hopes of coming to a final settlement, for our compensation.

As to the Iroquois ever abandoning their claim upon Vermont by leaving it as their hunting grounds, and have always hunted upon the same, since the time they emigrated to the river St. Lawrence, from the wilderness in which their support contained, in the year 1660, or thereabouts. There seems sufficient proof by the expedition of Champlain, in 1609, for the name Iroquois Country would be deemed sufficient proof that though this country was exercised as their hunting ground, but did not part with that title, although they emigrated into Canada, and did not cross the lines of their Territory, but still remained on the south side of the River St. Lawrence, and will ever bear the name Iroquois Country, till the name Iroquois is constrained off; the State of Vermont, by trade in relation to compensation, the aforesaid hunting grounds. The Iroquois Indians had not parted with that title, for they kept fighting all the other tribes or nations of Indians, and expelled them off, as it were from off their farm of produce.

But in as much as you do not accept of our proposition for compensation for our hunting ground, we have now come to the conclusion to make you the following proposition viz: We propose to submit our claim directly to the Legislature of Vermont, and rely upon the justice and Humanity of the Government of Vermont, and desire to have no debate upon the sum that ought to be paid, but prefer to hear from said Government through their commissioner, and we trust that the christian benevolence, and strict moral rectitude and equity of the Legislature will authorize the Commissioner to make us such a proposition as we in justice to ourselves and our people ought to accept, and we hereby agree to relenquish all claim upon Vermont, in consideration of such sum or sums of money as the Legislature shall appropriate for that purpose; all of which is

respectfully submitted by the Deputies. We now wait to hear from the Legislature upon the subject.

[Signed.]

FRANCIS D. ATOHASHOSHOR, } Delegates of
SO SE TAIOVONIOTE, } Caughnawaga.

JOSEPH KANATAKTAK PHILLIPS,
Secretary for the part of Caughnawaga Indian Tribe.

his
LOUIS ✂ TAIORONHISTHE, }
mark
his
PETER ✂ SAKOIA TENTHA, } Delegate of
mark St. Regis.
his
PETER ✂ SATEKAIENTON, }
mark

his
JOSEPH ✂ ONONKWA TKOWA,
mark
Delegate of Lake of Two Mountains.

ANTOINE BARON,
Interpetor for the St. Regis and Lake of Two
Mountains Iroquois Indians.

MONTPELIER, October 19, 1855.

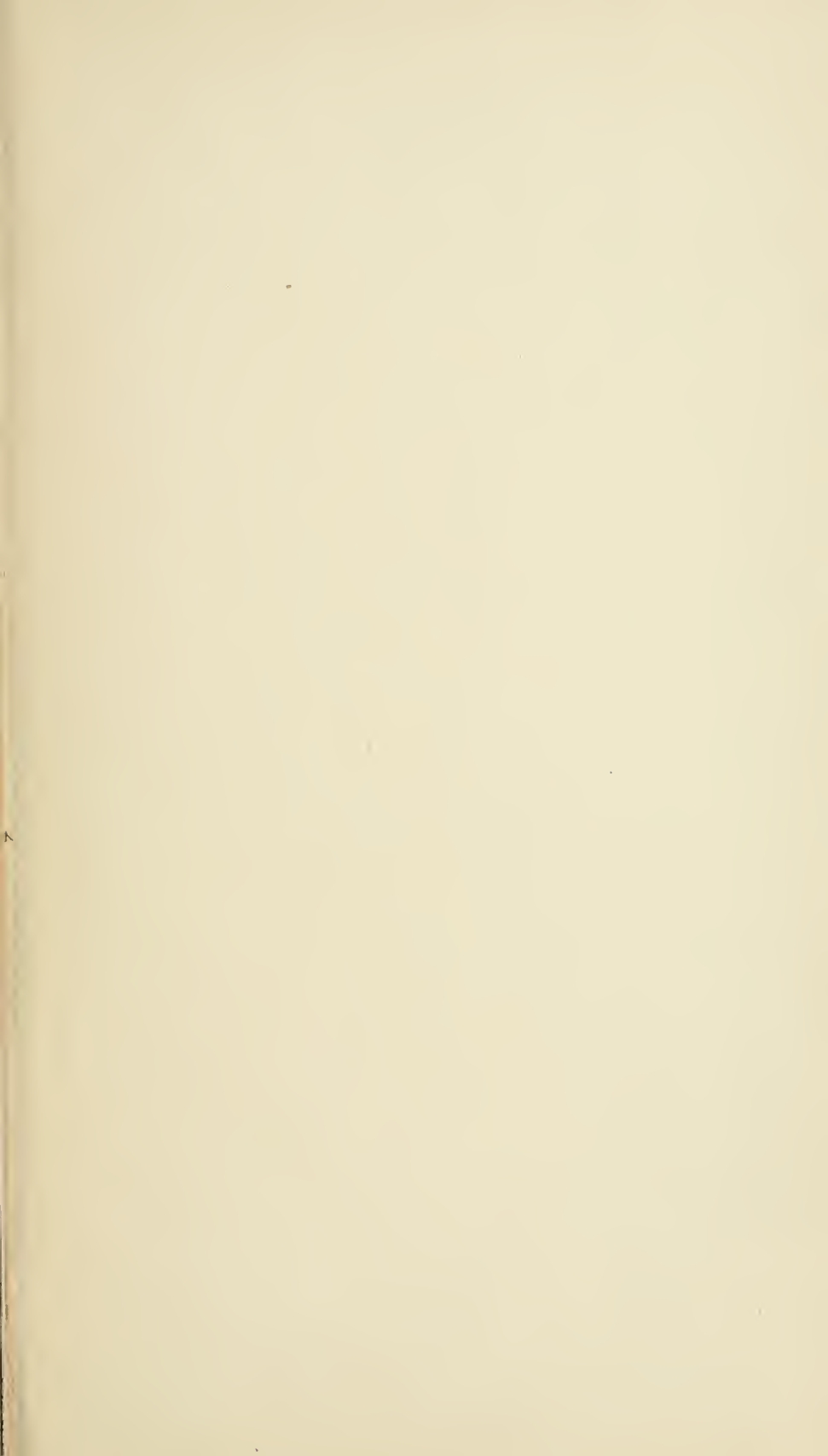
Gentlemen of the Iroquois.

I have listened attentively to your last proposition, which is to submit your claim, without further debate, to the Legislature; which proposition I very readily accept, trusting that the Legislature will be willing to do you ample justice,

J. M. HOTCHKISS.

Case





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